

**(SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTERHEAD)**

**DATE:** (INSERT)

**TO:** (SCHOOL NAME) Parents

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Adequate Yearly Progress

Many of you are aware of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which requires schools to assess students annually and to meet student achievement goals. If a school does not meet those assessment and achievement goals (termed “adequate yearly progress” or AYP) for two consecutive years, and it is a school that receives federal Title I funds, then it is placed on a federal “Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA)” list and subjected to federal sanctions. Schools or districts are cited if they a) don’t meet 95% participation rate for assessments, b) don’t meet student achievement goals, or c) don’t meet attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or graduation rate for high school.

I am writing to inform you that (SCHOOL NAME) has been designated as a “School in Need of Assistance,” or SINA, under these federal guidelines because a portion of our students (DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN TESTS AND/OR DID NOT REACH PROFICIENCY GOALS ON THEIR READING AND/OR MATHEMATICS TESTS, AND/OR ATTENDANCE RATE AND/OR GRADUATION RATE) for two consecutive years. SINA schools that receive federal Title I funding are sanctioned by the federal government. However, we do not receive any federal Title I funding, and so we will not receive any sanctions.

We do nonetheless want to communicate with you about the federal findings, and inform you about the many improvement strategies our school already has implemented. Please also remember that the SINA designation refers to federal criteria and does not reflect the overall quality of our school. (SCHOOL NAME) is dedicated to providing a superior education that ensures academic success for all its students. We remain a fully accredited school in complete compliance with State of Iowa regulations, including quality curriculum and teaching staff.

**WHY (SCHOOL NAME) DIDN’T MAKE AYP:**

Schools don’t make AYP when they don’t achieve one of the measures listed above: a) 95% participation rate for assessments, b) student achievement goals, or c) 95% attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or 90% graduation rate for high school. (SCHOOL NAME) is listed because not enough students met their goals in the following areas:

- Grade level, subject area, proficiency percentage, and state target
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade, math, 60% (64% was the state AYP goal)
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade, math, 90% participation (95% required)

You’ll note that some of the improvement areas relate specifically to instruction, such as reading or math, and some relate to test participation. That is because we are required to test fully 95% of our students; if we fall below that mark, we automatically are cited by the federal law, regardless of how well the students performed on the test.

About ##% of Iowa schools have been given the SINA designation, including about (#) in our school district.

**HOW (SCHOOL NAME) WILL IMPROVE:**

Although we have many indicators that show (SCHOOL NAME) is offering a top-quality education, we know that continuous improvement is important to ensure all of our students are reaching their highest

potential. Using data about the students and their achievement, our staff already has begun to identify areas for improvement. For example:

- List specific programs you have implemented to improve academic achievement.
- Include professional development opportunities for teachers.

Some student groups may require additional instructional interventions, pending a review of our current programs and services. In addition, the Iowa Department of Education and (NAME OF DISTRICT) district already have begun providing technical assistance to (SCHOOL NAME) as required by the NCLB law.

#### HOW PARENTS CAN HELP:

Parent support is essential to help your student reach his or her highest academic success, but parents may need ideas about the best ways to be involved. A few suggestions include:

- Communicate regularly with your child's teachers about overall goals for the year and your child's progress toward those goals.
- Make sure your child attends school regularly. Attendance is important at every grade level. When your child must be absent, please talk with the teacher to coordinate make-up work and assignments.
- Help your child with his or her homework. If you are unable to help, contact the school to request a tutor.
- Volunteer at the school. Every teacher needs volunteers to help in the classroom, or even with projects that can be done in your home. Other areas in the school, such as the office or cafeteria, also need volunteers.

**As parents, you can be assured your students continue to receive a high quality education at (SCHOOL NAME).** The assessment results cited by NCLB are one useful measurement for us, but we also have many other indicators to demonstrate that our students are indeed high achievers. You'll note from our school report card at (INSERT WEB ADDRESS) that each class at (SCHOOL NAME) has a number of success stories. For instance:

- Specific examples of student achievement, i.e. district assessments, ACT scores, AP courses taken, or graduation rates.
- Teacher qualifications, such as percent with advanced degrees.

We are very proud of our students and of the education they receive from the staff at (SCHOOL NAME). We also are committed to continuous improvement, and so will continue to seek new data and make any changes necessary to benefit student learning. We appreciate and depend on your ongoing support and assistance, and welcome your suggestions.

Sincerely,

Principal